



**The Ethical Society of Police - E.S.O.P.**

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Good morning:

My name is Heather Taylor. I am a twenty-year veteran of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD). I am a Detective Sergeant in the Homicide Section; however, I am speaking on behalf of the Ethical Society of Police (ESOP) as the elected president. ESOP was founded in 1972 to fight racial discrimination in our community and police department. We have 325 members in the St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and Ferguson Area. We are 97% African American.

I am here to give my perspective on white supremacist ideologies and white supremacist sympathizers in law enforcement. The FBI report from 2006 about “White Supremacist Infiltration in Law Enforcement,” the Plainview Project, which exposed racist content by police officers, and numerous other reports are clear examples of the problem with white supremacy and racism in law enforcement.

I want to provide my perspective by telling a true story. For nearly seven years, I have repeatedly reported an officer for his racism. I learned this officer had a penchant for making racist statements about black people on social media. He once stated, “Black people are pathetic.” He also cheered a black man being shot in the head, posting, “You can take him out of the ghetto, but you can’t take the ghetto out of him.” A black woman accused him of saying, “only prostitutes and drug dealers own Bentleys.” Another time, he made a racist statement about black people and welfare. This officer was also investigated for racial profiling a citizen. He was never fired for these statements despite complaints from sworn officers and citizens.

These statements were not the worst of his actions. This officer and other officers killed a black man under questionable circumstances in 2012. He used a banned chokehold, and another officer tased the man six times. The officers violated numerous policies. A witness said an officer used the “N-word” during this incident. Others stated the victim resisted arrest. The use of the “N-word,” all witnesses statements relayed to me, and the officers’ questionable actions were placed in the police report. The report was turned over to the Internal Affairs Division for review of criminal charges and discipline. I was told the officers were returned to full duty. No charges were filed because it was believed the

officers acted within the scope of the law. I delivered a copy of the report to the Circuit Attorney's Office in 2013, unsure if I could trust it had been done. To this day, I do not know if a Grand Jury reviewed the case or what discipline these officers faced, if any.

In June of 2020, this officer was taken off the street for another insensitive Facebook post about a black man. That post was about George Floyd, chokeholds, and his belief George Floyd's murder was justified.

I believe more extensive background checks during hiring, immediate termination, and the removal of the police certifications of officers that support white supremacy are the best means to counter white supremacists and their sympathizers in law enforcement. It is not possible to train away racism.

I would also like to state that whistleblower protections need to become a priority. When officers like myself break the blue code of silence and report officers for corruption, biases, and more, it is time to listen and protect us.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Heather Taylor, President of the Ethical Society of Police